

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site

Other names/site number: Cow Island Landing, 24BL0064

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: Approximately 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT

City or town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: MT County: Blaine

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☒

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national x statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A     B     C     D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒  
Public – Local ☐  
Public – State ☐  
Public – Federal ☒

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☐  
District ☐  
Site ☒  
Structure ☐  
Object ☐

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	buildings
<u>          3          </u>	<u>                    </u>	sites
<u>                    </u>	<u>          1          </u>	structures
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	objects
<u>          3          </u>	<u>          1          </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register                     

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE:  
TRANSPORTATION: water-related  
TRANSPORTATION: road-related  
DEFENSE: battle site

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation  
LANDSCAPE: conservation area

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: N/A

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site, located in Blaine County, Montana, lies above the mouth of Cow Creek, where it meets the north bank of the Missouri River. The 37-acre historic property encompasses an area that stretches from the bank of the river to a point midway up the bluffs, which overlook the site to the north. The landing site occupies a flat area thick with sagebrush and adjacent to a high bank along this stretch of the Missouri River. Cow Creek twists and turns substantially here, creating an oxbow bend dotted with mature cottonwood trees adjacent to the southeast boundary of the site. This lower area of Cow Creek is recognized as one of the more remote and uninhabited spots in an area notorious for its isolation. The landing site lies within Missouri Breaks National Monument, administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site represents the location of a September 23-24, 1877, encounter between warriors belonging to five non-treaty Nez Perce bands and a small party of entrenched U.S. Army soldiers and civilian freight clerks during the 1877 Nez Perce War. At the time, the location served as a commercial freight depot and landing located immediately above the mouth of Cow Creek on the Missouri River.

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## Narrative Description

### Setting

Cow Creek flows from the southern foothills of the Bear Paw Mountains to the Missouri through a unique and remote area known as the Missouri Breaks, commemorated in the name of the national monument. These arid and severely eroded badlands extend out from either side of the Missouri River, forming a landscape that parallels the river for over 200 miles. In the particularly rugged Cow Creek stretch of the Missouri, the Breaks extend back from the river for several miles, limiting access to both sides of the bottom lands near the water.

The Cow Creek drainage provides one of the few routes from the Missouri River north through the Missouri Breaks. As Cow Creek flows through the Breaks, it passes between high canyon-like walls, but the stream meanders back and forth over a canyon floor that is relatively level and wide. The floor of Cow Creek canyon provided a travel corridor to the northern Montana plains from land south of the Missouri since pre-contact times. Steep trails on the south bank of the Missouri opposite Cow Creek completed the route which connected the northern Montana plains to the central and southern Montana grasslands. The pathway was used seasonally by Native American tribes for centuries, as well as migrating herds of bison and other mammals.

Cow Island, approximately one mile downstream of the skirmish site, sits outside the National Register boundaries. The island, which divides the Missouri into two channels, makes crossing the broad Missouri, over 1,100 feet wide at this point, an easier undertaking. During the steamboat era on the Missouri River, the Cow Island (or Cow Creek) Freight Trail began near the mouth of Cow Creek, where a landing and freighting depot was developed. The north end of Cow Island also features a well-known natural crossing, likely utilized by the Nez Perce to cross the river at this point on September 23.

### Description of Resources

#### **Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site** (one contributing site)

The Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site is located on a strip of low-lying bottomland along the north bank of the Missouri River, just above the mouth of Cow Creek. Steep bluffs descend sharply to the river's south bank, while the high hills on the north side are set back from the river, creating a sizeable, gently sloping bench around the mouth of Cow Creek. The dominant vegetation in the area is comprised of generally mature sagebrush and grasses common to the surrounding arid, rugged badlands. Mature cottonwood dot the Cow Creek drainage. The entire skirmish site encompasses about 37 acres.

The Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site represents the location of a September 23-24, 1877, encounter between warriors belonging to five non-treaty Nez Perce bands and a small party of entrenched U.S. Army soldiers and civilian freight clerks. The clash occurred during the 1877 Nez Perce War, at the Cow Island Landing, then a commercial freight depot immediately above

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the mouth of Cow Creek on the Missouri River. This landing was constructed to enable overland shipping to Fort Benton during seasonal low water on the Missouri via the Cow Creek freight trail, which commenced at the landing.

On September 23, the Nez Perce unexpectedly crossed the Missouri River near the landing. At the time of the event, two steamboats had recently unloaded freight, and a detachment of soldiers under Sergeant William Moelchert happened to be at the landing to retrieve supplies for engineers working upriver. Negotiations ensued between Nez Perce leaders and Moelchert regarding provisions sought by the Nez Perce. After Moelchert essentially denied the tribal requests for provisions, warriors opened fire on the soldiers and civilians. The soldiers and clerks took shelter in a recently constructed irrigation ditch dug near the clerk's tents, effectively defending their position through the night from Nez Perce gunfire from the steep hills north of the landing. The Nez Perce took supplies from the tons of freight stored just north of the landing and camp and burned the remaining stores. The Nez Perce broke off the assault the following morning and resumed their trek north through Cow Creek Canyon in their attempt to reach refuge in Canada.

**Cow Creek Freight Trail** (one contributing site)

The area immediately north of the landing site includes two significant contributing features. The Cow Island Freight Trail crosses east/west, approximately 100 yards north of the camp site. The trail, though faint in spots, remains detectable as it runs into the mouth of Cow Creek Canyon, the known historic route of the freight trail; a portion of the trail has been destroyed by a deeply eroded cutbank of Cow Creek.<sup>1</sup> The trail resumes on the north side of the cutbank. Visible evidence of the trail consists of a narrow two-track that generally varies in depth from only a few to several inches deep.

A significant landscape feature, a deep coulee, terminates at the area near the trail and cutbank. The coulee extends from the base of the bluffs at the north end of the site, and the lower slopes of the north bluffs are included in the National Register boundary. Testimony from skirmish participants indicate that the tons of freight recently unloaded from two riverboats at the time of the conflict were stored in this area, and that the coulee was used by Nez Perce warriors to approach the freight remaining out of sight of the entrenched defenders at the camp, and eventually to set fire to the goods. The lower portions of the north bluffs were occupied by Nez Perce warriors who, from their elevated positions, fired down into the entrenchment. The identification of this important, intact landscape feature was important in identifying the historic property.

The noted photographer F.J. Haynes images (provided at the end of nomination) illustrate the evolving landscape. Cow Creek has substantially changed course between 1877 and the present day, and the faded freight trail now ends abruptly at a deep cutbank associated with the creek. The trail resumes at the other (north) end of the cutbank.

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<sup>1</sup> Historic photographs of the area demonstrate that the creek has changed direction substantially since the period of significance, shifting course to the north and west.

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**Nez Pierce (Nee-Mee-Poo) National Historic Trail** (one contributing site)

A segment of the Nee-Mee-Poo National Historic Trail is also considered a contributing resource to the property. The trail is broadly identified on Map 17 of the U.S. Forest Service's 1990 *Comprehensive Management Plan* for the Nez Perce Trail, and the landing site is designated as historic site #73, the Cow Island Skirmish and River Boat Landing.

The overall trail stretches from Wallowa Lake, Oregon, to the Bear Paw Battlefield near Chinook, Montana. Designated an historic trail by the U.S. Congress in 1986, the United States Forest Services' *Nez Perce Trail General Management Plan* includes a map showing the path of the trail through the landing site. The document further identifies this area of Cow Creek as a "high potential route," because little landscape change has occurred since the 1877 Nez Perce War, offering excellent interpretive potential.

**Dugout** (one noncontributing site): A deteriorated dugout is located near the far west edge of the Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site boundary. The timber-framed dugout, excavated into the east slope of a rise adjacent to the landing's camp site, features a façade composed of fourteen recycled pressed tin panels. The dugout appears to have been used as an outbuilding, perhaps a small barn.

Beginning in the 1890s and into the early twentieth century, the rugged landscape in this region became home to settlers, including James Kipp, who homesteaded immediately west of the Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site in 1913. The Kipp Homestead sits just north of the mouth of Cow Creek, on a terrace. Kipp, who claimed the homestead in 1913, was the grandson of James Kipp, a Metis trader who helped establish Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone in 1828 and who founded Fort Piegan at the mouth of the Marias River in 1831. The Kipp Homestead is abandoned but a cabin and outbuildings remain standing at the homestead site.<sup>2</sup>

The buildings and structures associated with the Kipp Homestead are historically significant in their own right, and their presence does little to diminish the integrity of the landing site. Except for the dugout, the other Kipp-related homestead features lie outside the National Register boundary for the Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Kipp homestead property is not listed on the National Register but it appears significant with intact integrity. All but one of the homestead buildings are located outside the National Register boundaries for this nomination.

<sup>3</sup> Background research indicates that no permanent buildings associated with the freight landing were developed at the landing site, which was used seasonally when low water on the Missouri prevented riverboats from researching Fort Benton, located some 120 miles further upriver. Photographs of the site area taken in 1880 by the noted photographer F.J. Haynes, indicate that tents were used for quarters. The images show the landing and associated camp adjacent to the north bank of the Missouri, on a flat, open space between the bed of today's Cow Creek and a terrace on which most of the Kipp Homestead buildings and structures are located. One Haynes image shows a parked riverboat located a short distance downriver from the encampment. The images suggest permanent docking facilities were never constructed to accommodate river boats; instead, gangplanks were used to shuttle between the boats and the north bank of the river. Overall, three different Haynes images provided three distinct perspectives of the camp and proved critical in pinpointing the location of the landing site.

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### **Integrity**

Because the Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site sits a very remote area, within Missouri Breaks National Monument, it displays an excellent level of integrity. The aspects of location, setting, feeling, and association remain incredibly strong, largely in part to the site's isolation. Integrity of design, workmanship, and materials, while important to many types of properties, are of far less-importance to properties like the Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site, generally because of their lack of applicability. The site never hosted any structures of permanence during its period of use as a landing site.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Native American

MILITARY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1877

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1877

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at a local and state level of significance. The site represents the armed encounter between Nez Perce warriors and a detachment of U.S. Army infantry and civilians during the Nez Perce War of 1877. The period of significance is 1877, the year the encounter occurred. The Cow Island Landing Skirmish Sites represents one of several locations where armed conflict transpired between the Nez Pierce, who were attempting to flee to Canada, and the United States military.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Cow Island Landing Skirmish, though remotely located and small in scale, had implications far beyond its isolated setting. Prior to this point in the Nez Perce War, the Nez Perce successfully fought and evaded the larger and better-armed U.S. Army for approximately 900 miles. Ten days earlier, the bands crossed the Yellowstone River and successfully staved off a cavalry attack at Canyon Creek. Following that encounter, the Nez Perce caravan separated from the pursuing forces led by General Oliver O. Howard and Colonel Samuel Sturgis. As they passed north of today's Lewistown, Montana, and entered the rugged portion of the Missouri Breaks country south of the Missouri River, Howard lost their trail. Most believed the Nez Perce would cross the Missouri at Fort Claggett, some 65 river miles west of their actual crossing location.

With the crossing of the Missouri River at Cow Island, the Nez Perce bands succeeded in placing another formidable river between themselves and the pursuing U.S. Army. As they drew within 85 miles from sanctuary in Canada, the Nez Perce no doubt felt cautiously confident in their ability to cross the border. However, unbeknownst to the bands, Colonel Nelson Miles and his forces had been dispatched from the Tongue River Cantonment, and were underway to intercept the Nez Perce.

In a war full of momentous decisions and fateful, violent encounters, the skirmish at the landing contributed to the outcome of the war in two noteworthy ways. First, the encounter at the landing allowed American military leaders to precisely determine the location, direction, and condition of the Nez Perce caravan. Prior to September 23, the military lost contact with the Nez Perce caravan and many assumed the bands planned to cross the Missouri far upriver near Fort Claggett. The clash at Cow Island Landing almost immediately resulted in the military rethinking their maneuvers. Soon after Major Guido Ilges' relief party arrived at the landing, he dispatched two scouts to find Miles (then operating near the Little Rocky Mountains) to provide him with accurate information on the tribes' whereabouts. Further, and perhaps more important,

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the skirmish delayed the progress of the Nez Perce during what became the critical closing phase of the conflict. While the bands gained an abundance of supplies taken from the landing during the encounter, they lost significant travel time, perhaps most of a day. As historian Mark Brown suggested, “that [lost] day may well have represented the difference between success and bitter defeat.”<sup>4</sup>

The delay brought about by the skirmish at the landing allowed Miles critical time to rapidly advance on the weary Nez Perce. This played a significant role in the Army’s ultimate success in capturing a large portion of the retreating Nez Perce during the war’s final engagement, the Battle of the Bear Paw. As such, the skirmish at the Cow Island Landing is significant, serving as a keystone site within a large constellation of historic sites which comprise the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, the Nez Perce National Historic Park, and other places important in Nez Perce culture, which allow commemoration and interpretation of the Nez Perce War of 1877.

### Narrative History

The Cow Island Landing skirmish occurred over three months after the Nez Perce War began in Idaho, in mid-June, 1877. By then, the Nez Perce had traveled nearly 900 miles and engaged the pursuing United States Army in several battles and skirmishes as the tribe attempted to reach refuge in Canada. After the September 13 Canyon Creek engagement, the Nez Perce moved steadily northward across the Musselshell River toward a known Missouri River crossing at Cow Creek. The bands outpaced their exhausted and ill-supplied U.S. Army cavalry and mounted infantry pursuers under General O. O. Howard and Colonel Samuel Sturgis. To combat this, Colonel Nelson Miles, with more cavalry and mounted infantry, was dispatched on September 18 from the Tongue River cantonment (the precursor to Fort Keogh near present-day Miles City, Montana), to intercept the Nez Perce caravan.

Early in the morning of Friday, September 21, a trader named Cyprien Matt rode into Fort Benton with news from Fort Claggett (a trading post at the mouth of the Judith River on the Missouri, sixty-five miles above Cow Island) that the Nez Perce were traveling up the Judith Basin headed for Canada. Officials at Fort Claggett requested personnel to protect the trading post. Major Guido Ilges, commander of the under-manned Fort Benton Military Post, directed Lieutenant Edward E. Hardin with thirteen men, plus two volunteer boatmen, to load a 12-pound mountain howitzer onto a mackinaw boat and set off down river to Fort Claggett.

Major Ilges, with Private Thomas Bundy of Company F, and twenty-four citizen volunteers, also departed Fort Benton that evening with intentions to impede the Nez Perce advance. The *Benton Record* newspaper reported the movements and warned that “It is hardly possible that a handful of men sent to protect Fort Claggett and Cow Island can give them [the Nez Perce] a very serious check.”<sup>5</sup> On Saturday, September 22, Hardin’s detachment reached Fort Claggett about midday,

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<sup>4</sup> From Mark Brown’s “The Flight of the Nez Perce,” University of Nebraska Press, 1967, p. 375-377.

<sup>5</sup> As quoted in “Historical Fort Benton,” by Ken Robinson, posted June 26, 2006. Viewable at [http://fortbenton.blogspot.com/2006\\_06\\_26\\_archive.html](http://fortbenton.blogspot.com/2006_06_26_archive.html)

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while Ilges arrived later that evening. Both the Ilges and Hardin forces remained at the outpost, awaiting word from scouts sent to locate the Nez Perce.

Meanwhile, activity continued at the busy Cow Island Landing. On September 19, the steamboat *Peninah* tied up at the landing and unloaded an estimated eighty-five tons of freight. That afternoon the wagon train of O.G. Cooper & Frank Farmer arrived at the landing via the Cow Creek Trail and began loading freight into their fifteen wagons.<sup>6</sup> By the morning of September 21, half the bull train was loaded and started the long haul northward to Fort Benton, over the thirty-two crossings of Cow Creek. That same day the steamer *Fontenelle* brought between fifty and seventy tons of freight, and eleven passengers to the landing.<sup>7</sup> Cooper's remaining bull train departed for Fort Benton on September 22. There were eight bullwhackers with this train, and a light passenger wagon with four women, accompanied by Dr. Brown, a U.S. Army surgeon, Captain Edmond Frechette, North-West Mounted Police, and an escort of five enlisted men—all the *Fontenelle*'s passengers.

Twenty-three miles from the Cow Island landing, at Dauphin Rapids, a U.S. Army engineering unit had been dispatched one week earlier to clear obstructions along that stretch of the Missouri. A small detail under Captain T.L. Kirkland was assigned to guard the engineers, though seven soldiers were dispatched to the landing to guard government freight. At noon on Sunday, September 23, Kirkland sent Sergeant William Moelchert, with two unnamed privates, to the Cow Island Landing by a borrowed woodhawk's boat, while a third private rode on horseback, pulling the boat upriver.<sup>8</sup> Moelchert's detail arrived at the landing to get supplies for the upstream engineering party. Four civilian freight clerks, Michael Kelly, George Trautman, E. W. Buckwalter, and Hugh Huggins were also there, employed by the Missouri River Transportation Company, more commonly known as the Coulson Line.<sup>10</sup> In all, fifteen soldiers and civilians were at the landing, while freight from the *Fontenelle* awaited shipment by bull wagon up the Cow Creek Trail.

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<sup>6</sup> The wagon trains were under contract with the Diamond R Company, transporting military and civilian stores from Cow Island to Fort's Benton and Shaw.

<sup>7</sup> The Cow Island Landing was established in 1863, when low water in the Missouri River made it impossible for steamboats to reach Fort Benton. That year, a crude road up Cow Creek was constructed and initial use began. In July 1864, a William Gladstone was commissioned to move 400 tons of freight deposited at Cow Island to Fort Benton, and to build a more serviceable road in the process. The Cow Island Trail followed Cow Creek north from the landing for several miles, crossing the creek some thirty times in the process. It was the head of navigation on the Missouri during low water in Fall. Overall, the trail covered 120 miles and was in use until 1882, when the coming of the railroad made steamers obsolete.

<sup>8</sup> William Moelchert, personal correspondence to David Hilger, Montana Historical Society, November 13, 1927. In this letter, Moelchert provides details regarding his experiences during the skirmish at the landing.

<sup>9</sup> The Nez Perce killed a fourth soldier, Private Byron Martin, who was sent overland from Dauphin's Rapids. His body was located by the party commanded by Lieutenant Hardin, who noted in his diary that he "Found Pvt. Byron Martin Co. B 7th Infantry and buried him near the road on the right-hand side about 300 yds [sic] from the Bull Creek crossing and about 20 yds [sic] from the road."

<sup>10</sup> Information on Missouri River riverboat companies from <http://www.riverboatdaves.com/owners/c.html>. Viewed July 20, 2012.

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Michael Kelly, said to have experience as an occasional Army scout, was Chief Clerk at the Cow Island Landing in September 1877. He recounted his memories of Cow Island in a 1901 interview with Montana's *Belt Valley Times* (Armington, Montana):

*To keep the water from running into their tent and supplies in case of a storm, they [the soldiers and clerks] dug a ditch about 2 1/2 feet deep all the way round. The dirt from the ditch they threw up on the outside. To that little ditch and wall of dirt we 10 men<sup>11</sup>, later on, owed our lives. For 30 hours we lay behind that little earthen breastwork and, with our Winchesters kept death and a howling horde of savages at bay.<sup>12</sup>*

On September 23, 1877 several hundred Nez Perce crossed the Missouri River near Cow Island in their flight toward Canada. Many Nez Perce were familiar with the area, having pursued the vast buffalo herds of the region many times in the past. The caravan likely reached the south bank of the Missouri via Woodhawk Canyon and crossed the Missouri at a well-known natural ford just north of Cow Island. In *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story*, the Nez Perce warrior said of reaching the Missouri:

*Its name at the crossing we struck is 'Seloselo Wejanwais,' [interpreted as] a kind of colored paint. There were a few buildings there [depot tents]. The chiefs said 'We will cross this river!' ...[I]t was the only place to ford. The water was deep elsewhere...We reached an island. We could not see the soldiers<sup>13</sup>. We went a good way and got on shore.<sup>14</sup>*

Yellow Wolf also stated that the Nez Perce, who detected the presence of soldiers at the landing, first sent an advance guard of twenty warriors who crossed the river to the north bank of the Missouri. Women, children and older people then crossed with pack horses, the horse herd and camp equipment, and finally a rear guard of warriors crossed. After crossing the river, the main body of Nez Perce traveled north past the soldiers without incident, and camped about two miles up Cow Creek, near the first bend of the drainage. A group of Nez Perce warriors then rode back to the entrenched soldiers, indicating friendly intentions and asking for food and supplies.

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<sup>11</sup> Kelly's estimate of the number of defenders at the Landing is less than that found in the historic literature.

<sup>12</sup> From Robison's "Historical Fort Benton, the Battle of Cow Island," posted April 13, 2009. Viewable at <http://fortbenton.blogspot.com/2009/04/battle-of-cow-island.html>. Kelly's account conflicts in some ways with Moelchert's version of events. Kelly does not mention Moelchert, asserts he commanded the defense at the landing, and notes that it was he who met and negotiated with Nez Perce leaders.

<sup>13</sup> Cow Island is approximately one mile downriver, around a large bend in the Missouri. It is not visible from the landing area.

<sup>14</sup> From *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story*, by Yellow Wolf and Lucullus McWhorter. Caldwell, ID: The Claxton Printers, 1940, p. 197-198; State of Montana hydrogeologists said to the author that a Missouri River crossing is likely located at a point just north of Cow Island. Most of the Missouri has a soft muddy bottom, but geologic conditions at this short section of the river likely created a hard rocky bottom which enabled easier crossing. For further information see the geologic map and explanation included in the continuation sheets.

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Upon the arrival of the Nez Perce, the soldiers and the clerks retreated into a ditch previously dug around their tents. In his *Nez Perce Summer, 1877: The U.S. Army and the Nee-Me-Poo Crisis*, National Park Service historian Jerome A. Greene wrote:

*Clerk Michael Foley, who claimed knowledge of Indians, advanced and spoke with them, but returned to tell Molchert [sic] that the tribesmen wanted to talk with the person in charge of the soldiers. Molchert went forward unarmed and was surprised to learn that some of the Nez Perce 'spoke English as well as anyone could' and readily expressed their friendship. Molchert refused to allow them to approach closer than one hundred yards from the defenses. When the Nez Percés requested provisions from the freight deposit, the sergeant turned and walked away, whereupon the tribesmen called him back to beg for food.<sup>15</sup>*

Moelchert recounted:

*[The warriors] came back the second time and I met them when they offered me money if I would sell them some of the freight as they were hungry and nothing to eat. I turned back to the breastworks and they came back the third time and pleaded with me for something to eat so then I went back to the breastworks and put a side of bacon in a sack filled about half full with hardtack, took it out to them and they very kindly thanked me for the same. Things went along for a while quietly till we saw an Indian coming between our breastworks and the foot hills stripped naked [sic] when we know this means fight.... This was sundown and from that time on till daybreak we were fighting for our lives.<sup>16</sup>*

Gunfire broke from warriors in the steep, eroded breaks north of the landing, where they positioned themselves to fire down into the entrenchment. Moelchert later stated that he anticipated the attack, and had already distributed ammunition and positioned his men within the entrenchment.<sup>17</sup> Two clerks, E.W. Buckwalter and George Trautman, were wounded in the opening volley and the defenders, though able to return fire, were pinned down.

Michael Foley provided a different account of the opening stages of the skirmish, stating that only he, not Moelchert, met with Nez Perce leaders, among them Joseph and Looking Glass. Foley stated that through a Nez Perce interpreter, perhaps Lean Elk (or Poker Joe), who had guided the Nez Perce caravan much of the way, he told Joseph and Looking Glass that he knew who they were, having seen a Nez Perce delegation in Washington D.C. some years before, and that he bore no ill-will toward the tribe.<sup>18</sup> Foley recounted that Joseph seemed impressed with his speech and asked for food. Foley complied:

<sup>15</sup> From Jerome A. Greene's *Nez Perce Summer, 1877: The U.S. Army and the Nee-Me-Poo Crisis*. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 2000, p. 237.

<sup>16</sup> Greene, p. 237.

<sup>17</sup> Moelchert to Hilger, 1927.

<sup>18</sup> A Nez Perce delegation visited Washington, D.C. in 1868, but Joseph or Looking Glass were not among the four Nez Perce delegates. Joseph visited the Capitol in 1879.

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*I told them to go to the big pile of freight and take what they wanted. I went with them down to the freight pile and the squaws took several sacks of sugar, some hams, hard tack and a lot of other truck. They carried it about a half a mile up the river to a little bench land where the whole lousy outfit had a feast and pow-wow. While the squaws were carrying away the provisions Joseph told me his men would not fight us. He said: 'We are across the water from the old woman'--meaning General Howard--'and I want to get in a good country where my young men and our horses can get plenty to eat. I told him that around the Little Rockies and the Bear Paw mountains the country was covered with buffalo, deer, antelope and elk and that grass was as high as his ponies' backs--and that was the truth, too. Well, after they had filled up on government bacon and hard tack the whole outfit pulled and moved over the bench into a little basin out of sight of our camp.<sup>19</sup>*

Foley continued, relating he remained worried about the Nez Perce intentions, so much so that the clerk reportedly stealthily reconnoitered the Nez Perce camp, where he saw warriors sitting in a circle, passing a pipe. He noticed that about one-fourth of the warriors did not smoke, and to Kelly that indicated that at least some of the Nez Perce warriors intended to attack. Foley returned to the landing and told the other men of his fears. The others were skeptical, but Kelly maintained that a Nez Perce attack would come in the evening. As he recalled, "*Sure enough, just about sundown, while we were all standing around drinking coffee and eating hard tack, there was the w-h-i-z, w-h-i-z [sic] of bullets in the air, followed by the crack of a dozen rifles. One of our men was hit in the palm of the hand while in the act of taking out a piece of hard tack.*"<sup>20</sup>

Kelly recalled the opening moments of the engagement:

*We hugged down in the ditch on the side next to the Indians and their shots all went over our heads or landed in the dirt bank. Well, after a few minutes of that sort of thing we began to get hot about it. I had a made-to-order Winchester rifle that was the best gun I ever handled. When I took a look along the sights of that gun and got the pumping machinery into motion something usually dropped and I want to tell you that several things dropped on that occasion. I noticed that the rest of the boys seemed to understand their guns pretty well and I reckon it was not more than a few minutes before we had all those Indians driven out of sight.<sup>21</sup>*

Yellow Wolf stated that he was not present when the shooting began. Instead, he had been directed by a chief to take the families and make a camp. Establishing camp was complete when he overheard another Nez Perce say that some of the warriors were riding back to the landing. Yellow Wolf then rode back to the landing, where he heard gunfire.

<sup>19</sup> Robison, "Historical Fort Benton, the Battle of Cow Island," posted April 13, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



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His account maintains that the soldiers and civilians found protection in the ditch and that the Nez Perce warriors were unable to dislodge them. Yellow Wolf recalled:

*The soldiers had everything fixed up. I saw food piled as high as this house [one story, sic] where the steamboats landed. Lots of other goods as well. Before night came we took food as we wanted. Each family took maybe two sacks flour, one sack rice, one sack beans, plenty coffee, sugar, hardtack. Some took bacon, everything to eat.*<sup>22</sup>

Michael Foley confirmed, “There was a coulee just north of the pile of freight that led back from the river and through this coulee the Indians were able to get at the pile of freight without us being able to see them.” Foley continued: “Working on the side of the freight pile furthest away from us they carried away everything they wanted and set fire to the rest.”<sup>23</sup>

Yellow Wolf added that “When everybody had what they wanted, some bad boys set fire to the remaining. It was a big fire”!<sup>24</sup>

The Nez Perce warrior Peo-Peo Tholekt similarly recalled the engagement at the landing. During extensive interviews with noted Nez Perce biographer and researcher Lucullus McWhorter during the 1920s and 1930s, Tholekt recalled:

*We reached the Missouri River where there was an island, and crossed. It was not too deep for our horses, and did not have to make skin-boats. Reaching the other side we found a big stock of supplies, camping outfits and lots of provisions, and a small bunch of soldiers guarding. We had a little engagement with them, and captured all the store. We took whatever we wanted, flour, sugar, coffee, bacon and beans; anything who ever wanted it. Some took pots and pans for cooking. We figured it was soldier supplies, so set fire to what we did not take. We had the privilege to do this. It was war.*<sup>25</sup>

The large stockpile burned brightly for most of the night fueled by sacks of bacon. The enormous blaze lit the landscape all around the entrenched defenders, allowing them to witness some of the movements of the Nez Perce around them and likely discouraging the warriors from approaching too closely. Foley offered:

*I believe they intended to carry everything away they wanted and then rush in and kill us, but the fire they started lit things up so well that we could see in every direction and we soon convinced them that it was decidedly unhealthy for an Indian to get out in the light. Four or five times during the night the Indians tried to rush in on us, but we always met them with such a volley of lead that they*

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<sup>22</sup> McWhorter, p. 199.

<sup>23</sup> Robison, “Historical Fort Benton, the Battle of Cow Island,” posted April 13, 2009. This coulee was identified during field survey.

<sup>24</sup> McWhorter, p. 199.

<sup>25</sup> *Peo-Peo Tholekt's Narrative*. Compiled by Lucullus McWhorter for use in *Hear Me, My Chiefs!*, McWhorter's account of the Nez Perce people and 1877 war. The iconic book, published in 1951, was written with extensive assistance from surviving Nez Perce, such as Yellow Wolf and Peo Peo Tholekt.

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*would retreat out of sight. We fired 600 rounds of ammunition that night. I believe the fire was what saved us, though.*<sup>26</sup>

Yellow Wolf does not mention any charges made by warriors, and noted that the engagement was essentially a long-distance affair. He told McWhorter that *"We warriors stayed there all night, watching and exchanging shots with the soldiers."*<sup>27</sup>

By the morning, Nez Perce leaders decided to end the attack. Yellow Wolf notes that the Nez Perce leaders back at camp declared that continued attacks on the entrenched soldiers and civilians would be fruitless. The chiefs decided, *"Let's quit! Soldiers are under bank. We can do nothing. Nobody killed and we have plenty of food."*<sup>28</sup>

Yellow Wolf said that the older warriors quickly obeyed the decree by the leadership and broke off the attack. To Yellow Wolf, the skirmish had been "nearly like play." Yellow Wolf relates that only one Nez Perce had been wounded in the skirmish, a warrior named Husis Owyee (or Wounded Head), who had been hit in the head by wood fragments splintered from a bullet.<sup>29</sup> The entire caravan headed north up Cow Canyon, away from the Missouri River and toward refuge in Canada, approximately 130 miles away.

Meanwhile, Major Ilges learned from his scouts that the Nez Perce had crossed the Missouri at Cow Island. On the morning of September 24, Ilges dispatched Lieutenant Hardin and his unit to Cow Island Landing via a mackinaw boat while Ilges left Fort Claggett and led his own party overland to the landing. He led his force the sixty-five miles downstream, arriving at the south bank of the Missouri (opposite the landing) that evening. Using Hardin's boat, his command ferried across the river and reached the landing by 9:00 pm. En route down the river from Claggett, Hardin picked up Sergeant Moelchert and his men, who were trekking to Dauphin Rapids, and brought them back to the landing.<sup>30</sup>

The following morning of September 25, Ilges started with his mounted civilian volunteers up Cow Creek, leaving Hardin's detail to defend the landing. Ilges had learned of the wagon freight train and light passenger wagon that were bound for Fort Benton, and he hoped to rescue members of either group from the advancing Nez Perce caravan should they attack the freight train.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> McWhorter, p. 199. In Foley's perhaps exaggerated account, numerous warriors were said to have been hit and thought to have been killed. Sergeant Moelchert makes no claim to have wounded any Nez Perce, so taken with Yellow Wolf's account, it is likely that no Nez Perce were killed and only one warrior slightly wounded.

<sup>30</sup> From "Report of the Secretary of War, Volume 1," Report of Major Guido Ilges, October 21, 1877. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877, p. 557-558.

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### Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

#### The 1877 Nez Perce War

The 1877 Nez Perce War occurred between five non-reservation Nez Perce bands and the United States Government, as well as Crow, Lakota, Flathead, and Northern Cheyenne warriors allied with the Government. The conflict was a strategic retreat conducted by the Nez Perce from their Idaho homelands, ultimately to Canada. The conflict became the final and most territorially-extended war between the U.S. Government and a Native American Tribe in American history. The retreat, which covered approximately 1,100 miles and included over a dozen battles and skirmishes, concluded along the banks of Snake Creek in north-central Montana, with the defeat of the weary Nez Perce bands at the Battle of the Bear Paw.

The Nez Perce Tribe is a Sahaptin language group residing in the Columbia basin of the southern Plateau of North America. The tribe is divided into Upper and Lower divisions, a separation based primarily on dialect groupings, while the entire tribe is closely related linguistically and culturally to other Sahaptin groups including the Palouse, Walla Walla, Yakima, and Umatilla tribes.<sup>31</sup>

Nez Perce territory centered on the middle Snake and Clearwater Rivers and the northern portion of the Salmon River basin in central Idaho and adjacent Oregon and Washington. Data suggests that by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Nez Perce were the dominant tribe in the region, with a population of well over 7,000 individuals located in over 70 permanent villages. These villages ranged in size from thirty to two hundred people, and geographically close villages were typically linked into bands; bands in turn were unified into composite bands. In one example of this, several bands on the upper Clearwater River made up the largest composite Nez Perce band located in the Kamiah Valley.

The Nez Perce were the most influential group in intertribal affairs in the Plateau. They roamed freely across today's Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and western Montana. Nez Perce warriors and their Cayuse allies led large intertribal bison hunts and raiding parties into the Plains that occasionally numbered over one thousand participants. And with the Cayuse, they were the main opponents of the Blackfoot who occasionally entered the Plateau and also defended against raids by Northern Shoshone-Bannock raiding parties. The tribe was the most renowned horsemen of the Plateau which enhanced their abilities as warriors, and their relative wealth in horses enabled the entire tribe to move efficiently between seasonal resource areas.

The first significant American contact with the Nez Perce occurred early in the nineteenth century. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, the American acquisition of 828,000 square miles from France was signed. President Thomas Jefferson, an advocate of exploration and

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<sup>31</sup> The information on Nez Perce history and culture from the "Handbook of Northern American Indians, Volume 12, Plateau." Entry by Deward E. Walker, Deward E. Walker, Volume Editor. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1998, p. 420-438.

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scientific inquiry, asked Congress to fund an expedition. The mission undertaken by the Corps of Discovery, and led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, explored and mapped the interior of the Pacific Northwest. During their travels, the Corps encountered many tribes, including the Nez Perce. In one of the more monumental early meetings between the explorers and western tribes, the Nez Perce considered killing the bedraggled explorers who entered their camp on the Clearwater River, in today's northern Idaho. However, one Nez Perce woman who had lived among Euro-Americans in Canada convinced the band's leaders to spare them. The Nez Perce fed the starving company, taught the explorers how to burn-out a tree to build a canoe, provided geographical information, and cared for the Corps' horses for several months while the explorers continued via the Columbia River toward the Pacific.

By 1813, the Nez Perce were firmly engaged in the fur trade with the North West Company. While the fur trade, as well as other trade and contact with early American immigrants and missionaries, initiated a period of economic prosperity (from a western perspective), contact with outsiders came with drastic consequences. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, epidemics reduced the tribe's population to about 1,800 individuals.

Continuing changes in the region included the organization of the Territory of Washington in 1853, created from the portion of the Oregon Territory north of the lower Columbia River and north of the 46th parallel east of the Columbia. To verse this new territory, Isaac Stevens was named governor, a position which carried with it the title of Superintendent of Indian Affairs for that region.

Soon after the creation of the Washington Territory, the Treaty of 1855, negotiated by Governor Stevens, secured Nez Perce ownership of a large reservation along with off-reservation hunting, fishing, gathering, and travel rights. However, with the 1863 discovery of gold in the region, the reservation was substantially reduced, and pressure increased on the Nez Perce to sell more of their homeland. That same year, the area of Washington Territory east of the Snake River and the 117th meridian was reorganized as part of the newly-created Idaho Territory.

The roots of the 1877 Nez Perce War stretch back to the 1855 treaty that formally designated traditional lands to the Nez Perce and the 1863 treaty that took those same lands away after the discovery of gold. While some Nez Perce bands did sign the second treaty and agreed to live on the Lapwai Reservation near today's Spaulding, Idaho, along the Clearwater River, Old Joseph, Chief Joseph's father and the leader of the Wallowa band, refused. He and other Nez Perce considered the traditional lands located throughout today's Idaho, Washington, and Oregon their irreplaceable home, even as homesteaders illegally took possession of the land.

In 1873, President Ulysses S. Grant issued an Executive Order that divided Nez Perce land in the Wallowa country between non-Indian homestead sites and the reservation. Two years later, Grant submitted to pressure from non-Indian settlers and politicians and revoked the order, instead opening the entire valley to non-native settlement. The United States demanded that all Nez Perce bands promptly move onto the Lapwai reservation. In 1877, the Nez Perce leader Chief Joseph was selected to meet and discuss the demand with U.S. Army General Oliver O.

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Howard. Little dialogue occurred as Howard delivered a 30-day ultimatum with a threat to comply with the order or be forcibly removed. The ultimatum was delivered during a time of great tension; dozens of Nez Perce were killed in the years and months prior to 1877. This was followed by a series of raids conducted by young Nez Perce warriors in the Salmon River Country, which occurred during the ultimatum period. Several settlers were killed during these raids.

Five bands refused to submit to reservation life leading to a hurriedly assembled U.S. battalion march on the main Nez Perce camp. On June 17, 1877, a force of approximately one hundred warriors fended off a U.S. Army attack at White Bird Canyon in Idaho, inflicting heavy casualties. Following their lopsided victory, the Nez Perce began their eastward movement out of the area, knowing they could not successfully engage Howard's full command for an extended period.

### **The Nez Perce in Montana**

Outmaneuvering the pursuing Howard through the summer, Chief's Joseph, Looking Glass, White Bird, Ollokott, and others led nearly eight hundred men, women, and children on a remarkable flight southeast over the Bitterroot Mountains, through southwestern Montana, then back north, and east across present-day Yellowstone National Park before finally turning north and crossing the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. Their movement through Montana was punctuated by several battles and skirmishes.

The Nez Perce fled through the Bitterroots along the ancient Lolo Trail, a ten-day journey that took them over the rugged mountains and into the Lolo Creek drainage. Just west of today's Lolo, Montana, they encountered Captain Charles Rawn and thirty-five members of the U.S. 7th US Infantry, a small command initially supported by civilian volunteers from Fort Missoula. Anticipating the passing of the Nez Perce, a log fortification was hastily erected blocking the trail. Rawn demanded the Nez Perce surrender; however, in a graceful maneuver and completely outwitting 7<sup>th</sup> US infantry, the Nez Perce simply outflanked Rawn and his men, traveling high up the hill and around the barricade, a maneuver that resulted in Rawn's failed blockade to be forever satirically dubbed "Fort Fizzle."

The Nez Perce entered the Bitterroot Valley on July 28, 1877. The valley was familiar territory, replete with trails that lead to the upper Missouri plains and commonly followed by Nez Perce hunters and raiding parties. Their route took them peacefully north through the Bitterroot Valley and over Gibbons Pass, after which they stopped to rest and provision themselves, setting up an encampment on the North Fork of the Big Hole River. On the morning of August 9, Colonel John Gibbon led 17 officers and 146 enlisted men in a deadly Army attack on the sleeping Nez Perce village. Gibbon was repulsed by a successful Nez Perce counterattack, but the soldiers' brutality toward Nez Perce women and children during the bloody 24-hour battle shocked the Nez Perce. The battle convinced all of the urgency of their situation and that the war had followed them to Montana.

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The bands intended to seek help from their traditional allies, the Crow, in southeastern Montana. The Nez Perce crossed back into Idaho over Bannock Pass before heading south and east towards Yellowstone National Park. General Howard troops, meanwhile, took a route roughly parallel to the bands. In an effort to slow down Howard, a small group of Nez Perce warriors sought to raid the military camp. Although discovered before a true raid could begin, the warriors succeeded in scattering the mule train, allowing the bands enough time to escape into the mountains of Yellowstone National Park.

With Howard's forces trailing and troops attempting to blockade their eastern exit routes off the Absaroka Plateau, the Nez Perce threaded their way through the park. They eluded troops once again, but on September 13, Colonel Sturgis caught up with the Nez Perce caravan just north of the Yellowstone River at Canyon Creek. Though outnumbered, the Nez Perce rear guard managed to hold off the soldiers, buying enough time for the bands to escape up into the canyon and reach the high, open plains to the north.

At Canyon Creek, it became sadly clear that the Crow would not aid the Nez Perce during their retreat (the Crow served as scouts for the U.S. Army and took part in the Canyon Creek engagement against the Nez Perce), and Nez Perce leaders changed strategy by attempting to reach refuge with Sitting Bull's Hunkpapa Lakota in Canada. They moved along familiar hunting routes, through the Judith Gap, and onto the plains. On September 21, a few individuals stopped for provisions at the Reed & Bowles trading post on Big Spring Creek, at the edge of modern-day Lewistown.<sup>32</sup> Their route then took them north to the Missouri River, into the deep and broken landscape known today as the Missouri Breaks.

The tribe crossed the Missouri River at Cow Island one mile below the landing, on September 23, 1877.<sup>33</sup> Following a freighting road, they moved up the drainage, attempting to obtain provisions from the freighters and skirmishing with the military and civilians (the subject of this nomination) as they kept their sights on Canada. While in Cow Creek, a dispute arose among the Nez Perce regarding the pace of the caravan. Lean Elk (Poker Joe) believed that swiftness should be maintained; other chiefs disagreed, and Chief Looking Glass assumed management of the caravan.

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<sup>32</sup> NR-listed August 10, 2010, NR #10000545.

<sup>33</sup> Cow Creek was originally named Windsor Creek by Lewis and Clark, after a member of their expedition. Early traders renamed it Cow Creek after a solitary cow that was found grazing near the island. Beginning in the 1860s, the Missouri River became a major thoroughfare to the gold fields of Montana. Due to low water in the Missouri beginning in mid-summer, it became common to land at Cow Island, and the associated Cow Creek Freight Trail became the last major wagon trail out of the Missouri River Canyon. In 1876, Congress designated funds to improve the upper Missouri, and Cow Island and Dauphin Rapids were designated as the highest priority location for improvement. Between 1877 and 1880, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed a wing dam which extended out from the south side of the river above Cow Island, a feature that has since disappeared. From *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Draft Nomination Form (#24BL205), Cow Island Landing*. By Susan W. Curtis, Edrie Vinson and Frederic W. Quie, 1976.

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Believing they finally out-distanced their pursuers, Looking Glass allowed the weary Nez Perce to stop for rest near the Bear Paw Mountains in Montana. Roughly only forty miles from the Canadian border, and unbeknownst to the Nez Perce, the army closed in as Colonel Nelson Miles, dispatched from Fort Keogh by telegraph, lead his troops on a hurried, 160-mile march to intercept the bands before they crossed the border.

Miles attacked early on September 30, beginning the Battle of the Bear Paw. After a five-day battle-turned-siege, during which Howard's forces joined Miles and the outnumbered and outgunned Nez Perce warriors fought the soldiers to a stalemate, Joseph and his exhausted bands finally surrendered. In his celebrated, poignant surrender speech, Chief Joseph was said to conclude with: "Hear me, my Chiefs! I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

Despite the surrender, over two hundred Nez Perce successfully escaped to Canada to refuge with Sitting Bull. The Nez Perce captured at Bear Paw were sent to Oklahoma and not allowed to return to their homes in the Pacific Northwest until 1885. Shockingly, more Nez Perce died during internment in Oklahoma than did during the 1877 war. Even upon the eventual return of the Nez Perce, the U.S. Government refused to allow Joseph to reside at Lapwai, instead confining him to the Colville Reservation in Washington, where he died in 1904.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 37

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 47.792755 | Longitude: -108.939986 |
| 2. Latitude: 47.796092 | Longitude: -108.938439 |
| 3. Latitude: 47.796093 | Longitude: -108.93247  |
| 4. Latitude: 47.791436 | Longitude: -108.937702 |

**Or**  
**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1	<u>12</u>	<u>654279</u>	<u>5295321</u>	3	<u>12</u>	<u>654832</u>	<u>5295707</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>12</u>	<u>654385</u>	<u>5295695</u>	4	<u>12</u>	<u>654454</u>	<u>5295179</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Legal Location: PM: Montana Township 23N, Range 22E, the S1/2 of the NE1/4 of the NE1/4 of Section 6; and the N1/2 of the SE1/4 of the NE1/4 of Section 6.

Please see topographic map

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Selected National Register boundaries encompass the salient locations where the landing and depot were located in 1877 and where the Nez Perce staged attacks on the entrenched soldiers and civilians. To document the location, MPA conducted extensive textual research on the encounter at the landing. MPA reviewed after-action reports filed by Major Guido Ilges as well as historical eyewitness accounts provided by Sergeant William Moelchert and Clerk Michael Kelly, who were present. These accounts included both general descriptions of the distances between known locations to the event site, as well as descriptions of landmarks unique to the location. MPA also reviewed historic maps of the area, including General Land Office (GLO) maps of information on the historic location of the Cow Island Freight Trail and the orientation of Cow Creek. The location of these resources was important in locating the landing site and the GLO maps were compared to USGS 7.5 minute maps of the area.

MPA also conducted extensive research into secondary sources, notably the work of Lucullus McWhorter, which documented the landing skirmish from the tribal perspective, as well as the research of local, amateur historians with a demonstrated interest and knowledge of the landing

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and its location. The research of historian Leroy "Andy" Anderson was especially helpful, and his publications and field notes documenting his own findings at the site, located at Special Collections, Washington State University Library, the Montana Historical Society and the Blaine County Historical Museum, were reviewed. MPA researchers also meet with Anderson, who marked the general location of relevant Cow Creek sites.

Based on this data, MPA and BLM staff conducted field reconnaissance of the landing site. During field work, MPA utilized three 1880 photographs of the landing site, which, using the surrounding landscape, demonstrated the likely specific location of the landing. Further, the coulee noted by Michael Kelly was located, which aided in recreating the orientation of the landing and determining site boundaries. Boundaries were drawn based upon this evidence, and the natural features such as the river and changes in elevation, which contain the site and create natural divisions in the landscape and its contours.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jim Jenks  
organization: Montana Preservation Alliance  
street & number: 120 Reeder's Alley  
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59601  
e-mail: ([chere@preservemontana.org](mailto:chere@preservemontana.org))  
telephone: (406) 457-2822  
date: April 2018

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### Property Owner:

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

---

name	<u>American Prairie Foundation</u>	telephone	<u>877-273-1123</u>
street & number	<u>P.O. Box 908</u>	state	<u>Montana 59771</u>
city or town	<u>Bozeman</u>		

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Property Owner:(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

---

name	<u>Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior</u>	telephone	
street & number	<u>920 North East Main Street</u>	state	<u>MT</u>
city or town:	<u>Lewistown</u>		

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of \_\_\_\_.

See Below

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

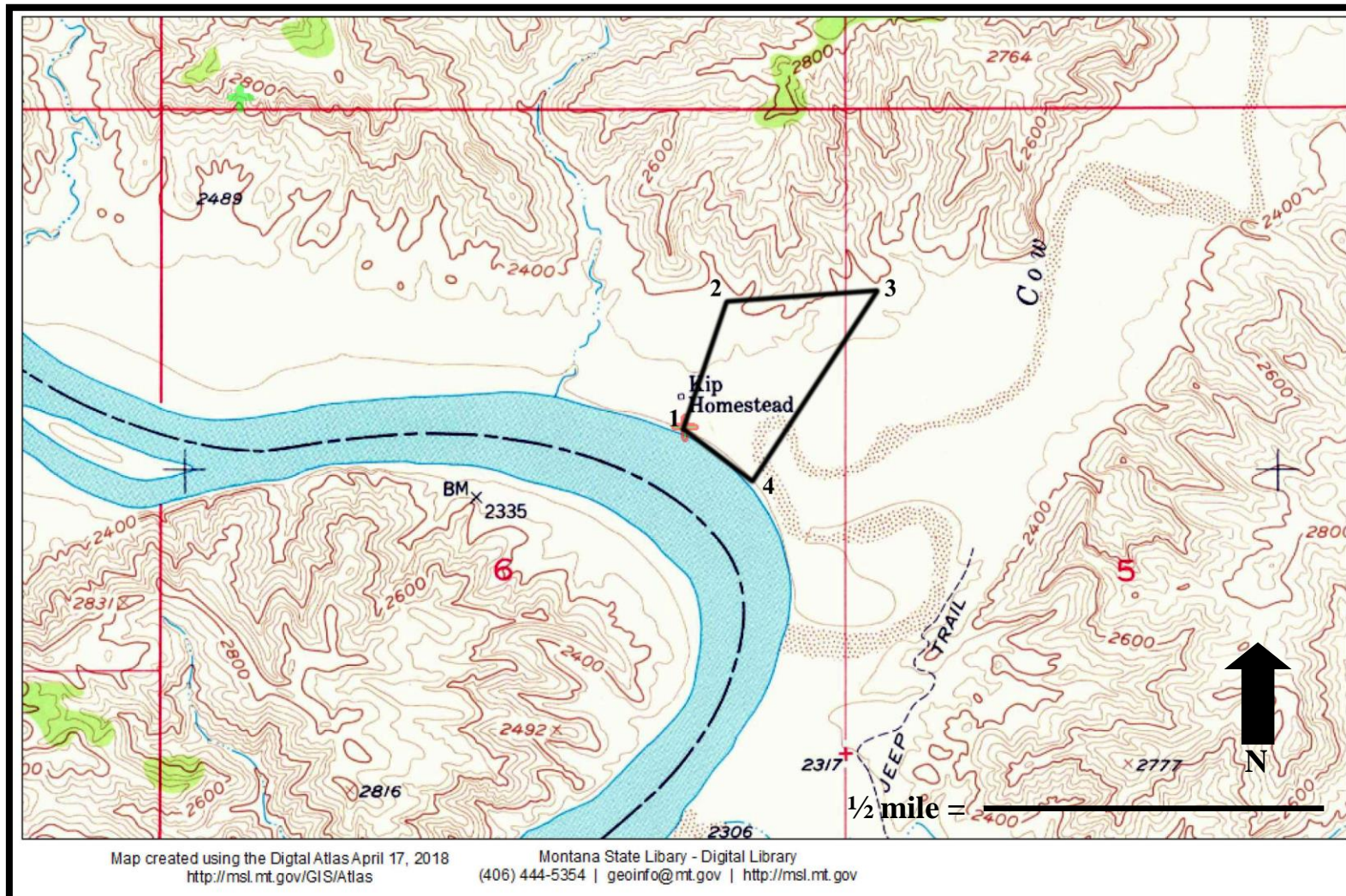
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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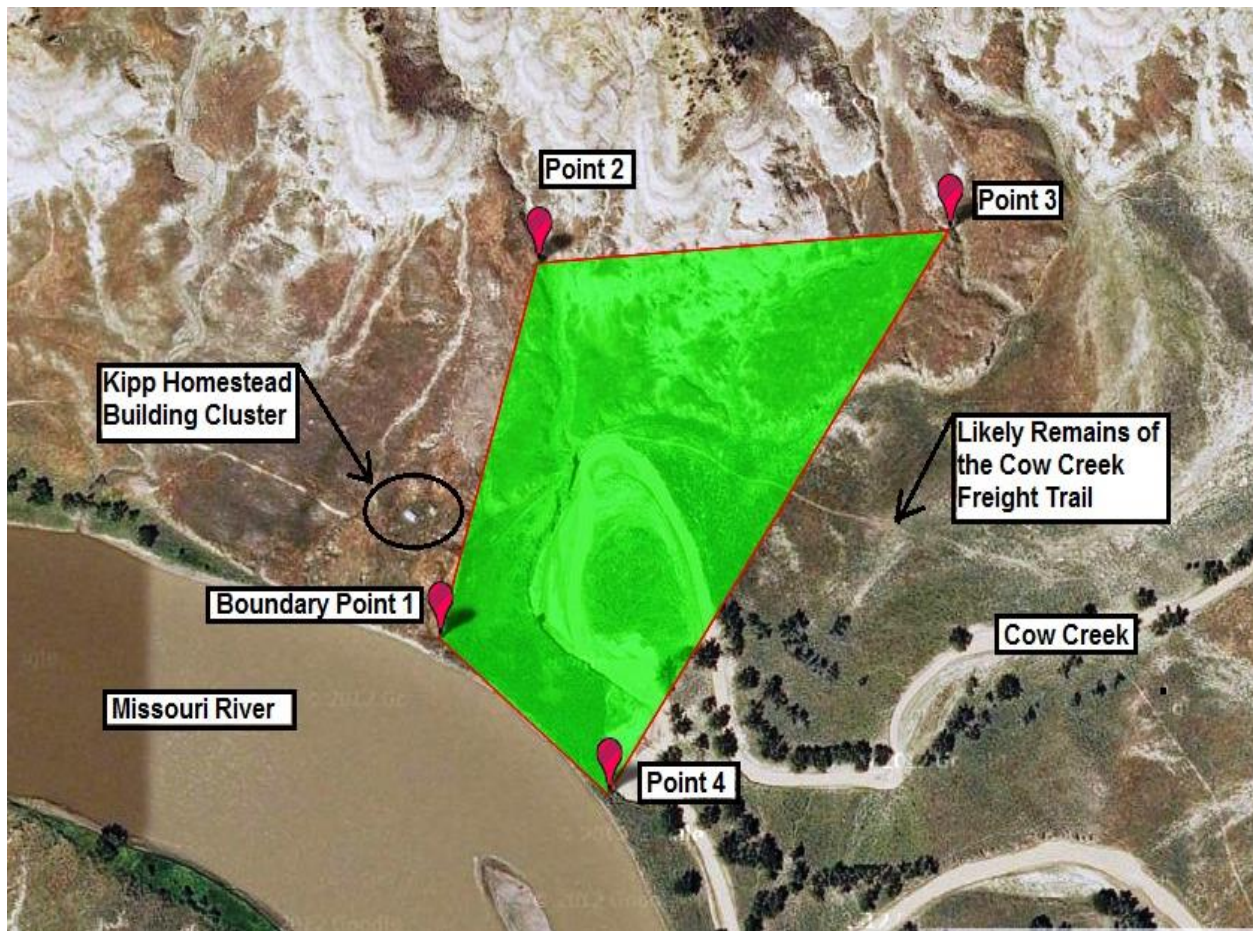


Location of Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site, found on the Cow Island, Montana 1987 USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle



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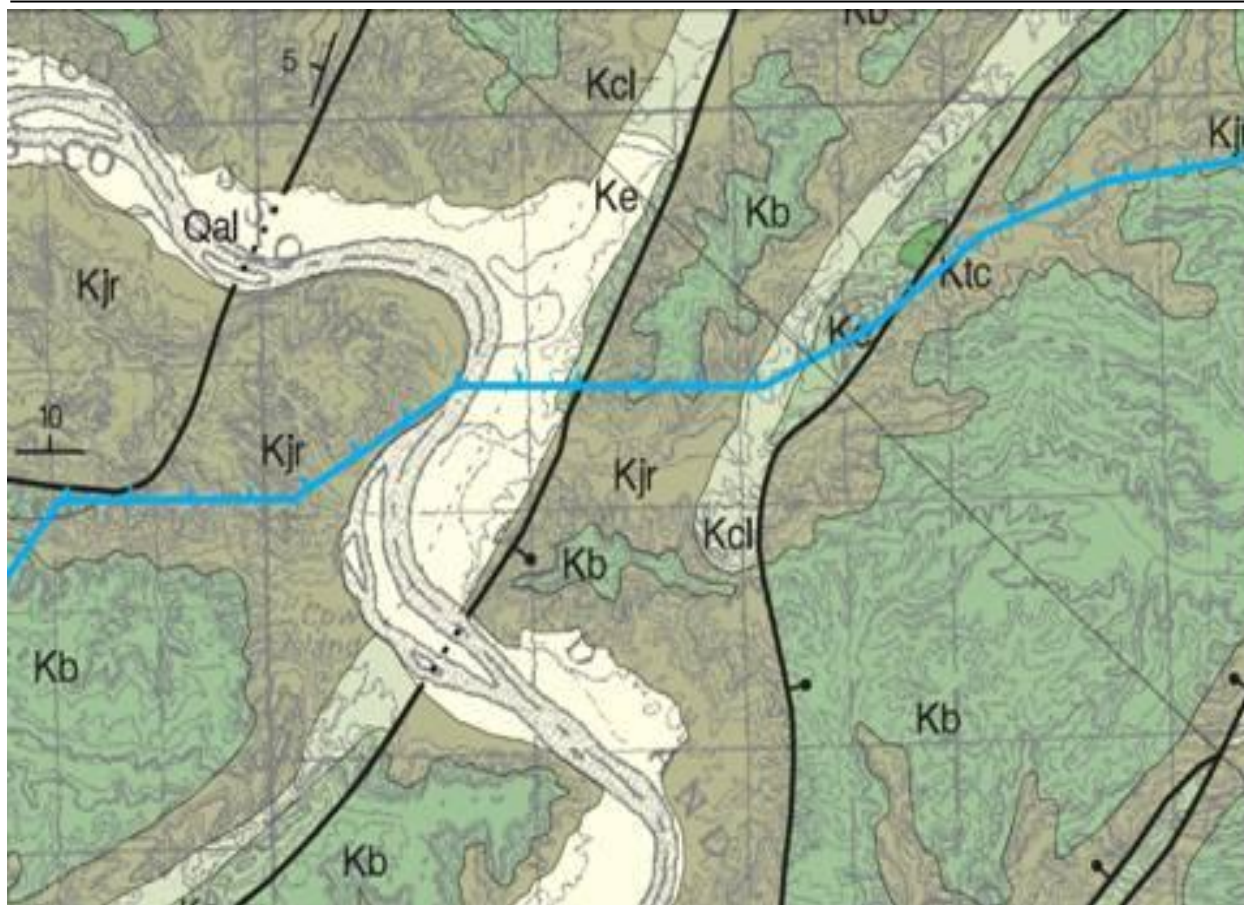
**Aerial Image of the Cow Island Landing Site  
depicting National Register boundaries and significant site features  
Base Map Downloaded from Google Earth, 2012**

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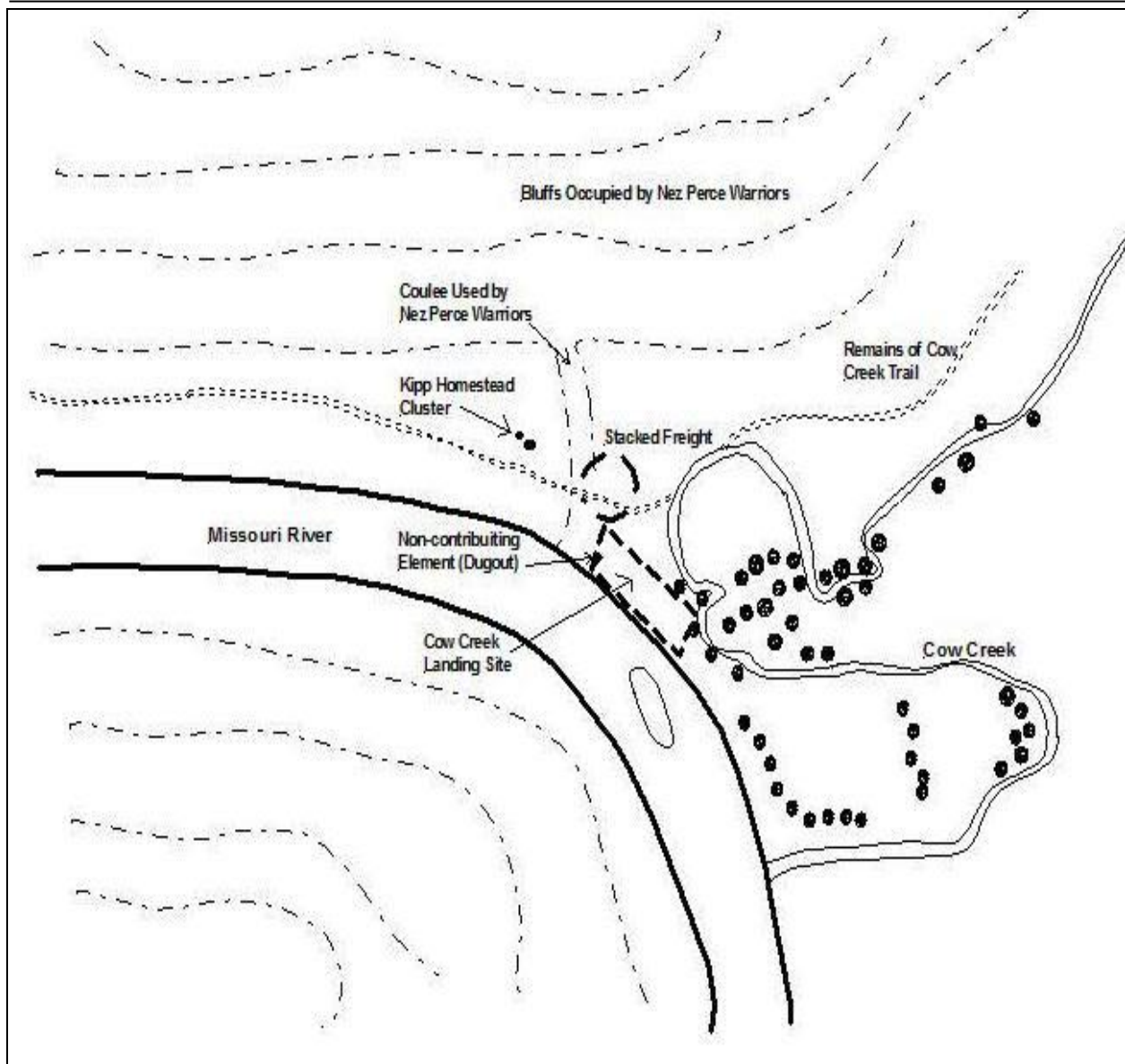
Based on information from hydrogeologists at the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, the Judith River (Kjr on the map) and Eagle Sandstones (Ke) probably under crop the river on the north part of Cow Island and the soft, easily eroded Claggett Shale (Kcl) under crops the south end. The blue horizontal (east/west) line which is somewhat parallel to the river through the Ke Formation is where geologists infer contact under the river with the alluvium, thus creating a sandstone bottom under this section of the river. Crossing the river would be much safer on the sandstone, so this is considered a likely location where the Nez Perce crossed the Missouri.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Information and map from geologists John Metesh and Susan Vuke to author, email communication July 6, 2010.



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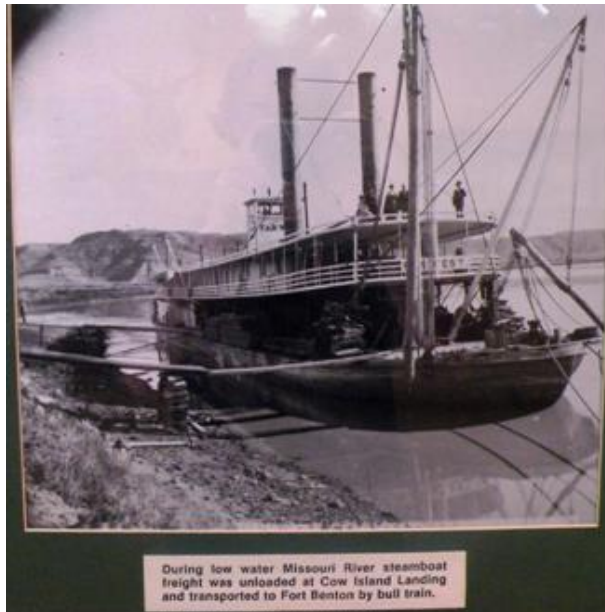
**Sketch Map of the Cow Island Landing Site**



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## Historic Photographs



Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Photographer unknown. Perhaps F.J Haynes c. 1880. Photo on display at the Blaine County Museum.  
Date Photographed: Date unknown. Photo on display at the Blaine County Museum.  
Description View of a riverboat the Cow Island Landing. Facing south.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Photo by F.J. Haynes (from the Montana Historical Society)  
Date Photographed: 1880 (from the Montana Historical Society)  
Description 1880 overview image of the Cow Island Landing. The caption associated with the image at the Blaine County Museum states "The mouth of Cow Creek may be seen just beyond the steamboat in the picture, taken in 1880 by the great documentary photographer Frank Haynes. Cow Creek comes in from the north, and only in the spring or flood time does it contain any water. The stream appearing in the distance, as indicated by the brush, is Bull Creek. Cow Island itself is not shown in the picture, but is down the river a short distance. Haynes took the picture from the west, looking toward the east, or downriver." Soldiers are in the lower right side of the image, likely engineers completing the wing dam at Cow Island between 1877-1880.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: F.J. Haynes (from the Montana Historical Society)  
Date Photographed: 1880 (from the Montana Historical Society)  
Description 1880 Haynes image, depicting the U.S. Army and freight camp at the landing. The personnel photographed here were likely clerks, as well as engineers constructing the wing dam at Cow Island built between 1877 and 1880. The image captures the bluffs north of the landing site, used during field survey to pinpoint the location of the landing. Facing north.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: F.J. Haynes (from the Montana Historical Society)  
Date Photographed: 1880 (from the Montana Historical Society)  
Description 1880 Haynes image of four soldiers posing at the landing site. The bluffs in the background, on the south side of the Missouri River, were used during field survey to locate the landing site. Facing south.

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**National Register Photographs**

The accompanying photographs meet current National Register standards of 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. The images are also recorded on an archival CD-R with a resolution at least 1200x1800 pixels, 300 dpi in "true color" 24-bit format. Electronic images stored at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT and at the American Battlefield Protection Program in Washington, DC.

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Montana Geographical Society  
Date Photographed: September 2009  
Photo 0001 of 0018 View of the upper landing area along the Missouri River, above the mouth of Cow Creek, in the Missouri Breaks. The Kipp Homestead is visible in the lower center of the image, while the location of the landing is the immediate left side of the image. Facing north.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0002 of 0018 Image taken from the location of the U.S. Army, freight camp and landing site as demonstrated in the 1880 F.J. Haynes photo (above). This is also the probable location of the 1877 freight camp and landing site. Facing north.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0003 of 0018 View of the Missouri River from the U.S. Army and freight camp, and the landing site (above) as captured in the 1880 Haynes photo. Facing south.

Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0004 of 0018 View of the landing area adjacent to the Missouri River, upriver from the mouth of Cow Creek and just downriver from the camp location portrayed in the Haynes photos above. Photo 20 was used to determine the likely location where riverboats unloaded, though the exact location likely varied slightly along this stretch of the river. Facing southeast.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0005 of 0018 View demonstrating the probable remains of the Cow Creek Freight Trail as well as the likely location of the stacked freight ransacked and burned by Nez Perce warriors. The area is located north of the camp and landing site, and just south of the mouth of the coulee used by warriors to reach the freight. Cow Creek has changed course since 1877, eroding a portion of the trail. The mouth of Cow Creek canyon is visible in the upper-right side of the image, in the direction of the trail.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0006 of 0018 View of an eroded cutbank at the Cow Creek channel. The Cow Creek trail resumes at the other end of the cutbank. Facing northeast.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0007 of 0018 View of a grove of cottonwood trees which parallel the Cow Creek channel. This area is located southeast of the landing location, just outside the boundaries for the historic property. Facing southeast.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0008 of 0018 View of the dry Cow Creek drainage, with the mouth of Cow Canyon in the background. During the skirmish, the Nez Perce camp was located approximately one mile from the landing, just around the first bend in the canyon. Facing northeast.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0009 of 0018 View of the landing site. This image replicates an 1880 Haynes photo (see photo 20). The Kipp Homestead buildings are shown on the center-right of the image, on a terrace above the camp and landing. The camp and landing were located between the buildings and the island. The island was not present in 1877. Facing southeast.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0010 of 22 Zoomed in view of the landing site. Facing southeast.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0011 of 0018 View taken from the same position as photos 9, 10, and 20. The bluffs on the left would have been occupied by Nez Perce warriors who fired down into the landing site. The lower portion of these bluffs are included in the National Register boundaries. Facing east.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0012 of 0018 View of the north end of the coulee, at the foot of the north bluffs. The bluffs were occupied by Nez Perce warriors who poured gunfire down on the entrenched soldiers and freight clerks. The coulee forms a critical component of the historic property, as it was used by Nez Perce warriors to approach the freight stored at the north side of the camp site. The coulee is not visible from the camp and landing site, affording the warriors a screened path free from gunfire from the entrenched defenders. Facing north.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0013 of 0018 View of the coulee leading to the landing site, demonstrating the approach used by warriors to the stacked freight via the coulee. Facing south.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0014 of 0018 View of the terminus of the coulee. The freight stored in this area was raided by Nez Perce warriors then burned. This area is not visible from the landing site, so warriors were safe from gunfire from the entrenched soldiers and civilians. Facing north.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0015 of 0018 View of the single non-contributing element within the historic property. This deteriorated dugout is associated with the Kipp era of occupation, which post-dates the period of significance for the landing site. Facing west.



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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0016 of 0018. View of the Kipp Homestead buildings, which are located on a terrace west of the landing site. These buildings are not located within the national register boundaries for the landing site. Facing northwest.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Montana Geographical Society  
Date Photographed: September 2009  
Photo 0017 of 0018 Overview of the landing site landscape, with the historic property located in the center of the image near the bend in the Missouri River. Facing northwest.

Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0018 of 0018 On the Missouri River, with Cow Island in the center of the photo. The Nez Perce descended to the river from the bluffs on the right (south) side of the image, crossing the river at a natural crossing north of the north end of Cow Island. Facing south.

Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site  
Name of Property

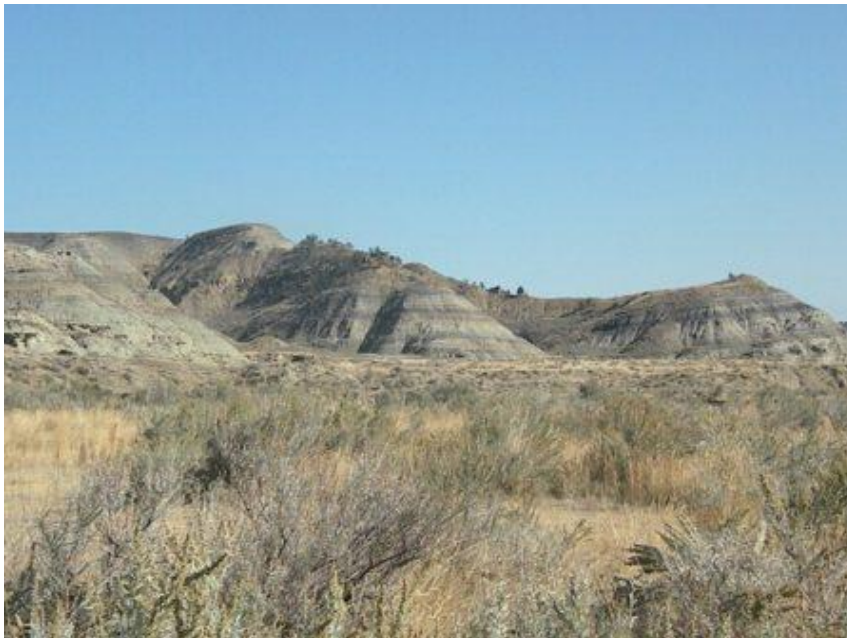
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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Montana Geographical Society  
Date Photographed: September 2009  
Photo 0001 of 0018 View of the upper landing area along the Missouri River, above the mouth of Cow Creek, in the Missouri Breaks. The Kipp Homestead is visible in the lower center of the image, while the location of the landing is the immediate left side of the image. Facing north.

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Name of Property

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site

City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT

County: Blaine State: Montana

Photographer: Jim Jenks

Date Photographed: October 2012

Photo 0002 of 0018. Image taken from the location of the U.S. Army, freight camp and landing site as demonstrated in the 1880 F.J. Haynes photo (see photo 21 of 22 to compare background landscape). This is also the probable location of the 1877 freight camp and landing site. Facing north.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0003 of 0018 View of the Missouri River from the U.S. Army and freight camp, and the landing site (see image 22 to compare background landscape) as captured in the 1880 Haynes photo. Facing south.

Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site  
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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0004 of 0018 View of the landing area adjacent to the Missouri River, upriver from the mouth of Cow Creek and just downriver from the camp location portrayed in the Haynes photos. Photo 20 was used to determine the likely location where riverboats unloaded, though the exact location likely varied slightly along this stretch of the river. Facing southeast.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0005 of 0018 View demonstrating the probable remains of the Cow Creek Freight Trail as well as the likely location of the stacked freight ransacked and burned by Nez Perce warriors. The area is located north of the camp and landing site, and just south of the mouth of the coulee used by warriors to reach the freight. Cow Creek has changed course since 1877, eroding a portion of the trail. The mouth of Cow Creek canyon is visible in the upper-right side of the image, in the direction of the trail.



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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0006 of 0018 View of an eroded cutbank at the Cow Creek channel. The Cow Creek trail resumes at the other end of the cutbank. Facing northeast.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0007 of 0018 View of a grove of cottonwood trees which parallel the Cow Creek channel. This area is located southeast of the landing location, just outside the boundaries for the historic property. Facing southeast.



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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0008 of 0018 View of the dry Cow Creek drainage, with the mouth of Cow Canyon in the background. During the skirmish, the Nez Perce camp was located approximately one mile from the landing, just around the first bend in the canyon. Facing northeast.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0009 of 0018 View of the landing site. This image replicates an 1880 Haynes photo (see photo 20). The Kipp Homestead buildings are shown on the center-right of the image, on a terrace above the camp and landing. The camp and landing were located between the buildings and the island. The island was not present in 1877. Facing southeast.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0010 of 0018 Zoomed in view of the landing site. Facing southeast.

Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site  
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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0011 of 0018 View taken from the same position as photos 9, 10, and 20. The bluffs on the left would have been occupied by Nez Perce warriors who fired down into the landing site. The lower portion of these bluffs are included in the National Register boundaries. Facing east.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012

Photo 0012 of 0018 View of the north end of the coulee, at the foot of the north bluffs. The bluffs were occupied by Nez Perce warriors who poured gunfire down on the entrenched soldiers and freight clerks. The coulee forms a critical component of the historic property, as it was used by Nez Perce warriors to approach the freight stored at the north side of the camp site. The coulee is not visible from the camp and landing site, affording the warriors a screened path free from gunfire from the entrenched defenders. Facing north.



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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0013 of 0018 View of the coulee leading to the landing site, demonstrating the approach used by warriors to the stacked freight via the coulee. Facing south.

Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site  
Name of Property

Blaine County, Montana  
County and State



Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0014 of 0018 View of the terminus of the coulee. The freight stored in this area was raided by Nez Perce warriors then burned. This area is not visible from the landing site, so warriors were safe from gunfire from the entrenched soldiers and civilians. Facing north.

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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0015 of 0018 View of the single non-contributing element within the historic property.  
This deteriorated dugout is associated with the Kipp era of occupation, which post-dates the period of significance for the landing site. Facing west.



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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0016 of 0018 View of the Kipp Homestead buildings, which are located on a terrace west of the landing site. These buildings are not located within the national register boundaries for the landing site. Facing northwest.

Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site  
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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Montana Geographical Society  
Date Photographed: September 2009  
Photo 0017 of 0018 Overview of the landing site landscape, with the historic property located in the center of the image near the bend in the Missouri River. Facing northwest.

Cow Island Landing Skirmish Site  
Name of Property

Blaine County, Montana  
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Name of Property: Cow Island Landing Site  
City or Vicinity: 28 miles northeast of Winifred, MT  
County: Blaine State: Montana  
Photographer: Jim Jenks  
Date Photographed: October 2012  
Photo 0018 of 0018 On the Missouri River, with Cow Island in the center of the photo. The Nez Perce descended to the river from the bluffs on the right (south) side of the image, crossing the river at a natural crossing north of the north end of Cow Island. Facing south.